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RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0183
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5284
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2093
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4801
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2346
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2936
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1029
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001522

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP, DRL, DRL/AWH
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- TENSIONS TORQUE UP IN RESTIVE PROVINCE

REF: JAKARTA 1393 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Indonesian security forces allegedly shot a Papuan protester to death during an August 9 rally in Papua. The shooting came after activists raised a flag regarded as a separatist symbol during a large rally. On the advice of the GOI, Mission has postponed a trip to Papua due to the incident and related tensions. Mission raised USG concerns about the shooting with Indonesian officials. They promised a complete investigation.

12. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): In separate news, Indonesians have criticized and publicly protested a recent U.S. Congressional letter calling for the release of two jailed Papuan activists. Mission has reiterated that the USG fully respects Indonesian territorial integrity, but called on the GOI to respect peaceful political expression. END SUMMARY.

ONE DEAD IN SHOOTING

13. (C) There has been violence in Papua in eastern Indonesia. Based on what we understand, the Dewan Adat Papua (DAP)--a coalition of traditional and tribal leaders--organized a major rally on August 9 in Wamena in central Papua to mark United Nations Indigenous Peoples' day. (Note: Wamena is the major town in Papua's central highlands.) DAP Chairman Forkorus Yaboysembut said the rally aimed to draw attention to Papuan traditional cultures which the DAP believes are threatened by poverty, disease, and migration from other parts of Indonesia. Several thousand people converged on Wamena for the rally, which was supposed to include speeches by local notables and traditional dance and music performances. Sources on the ground estimated that as many as 10,000 people attended the rally.

14. (C) A small group of Papuan activists interrupted the proceedings to raise the Indonesian and United Nations flags as well as the "Morning Star" flag. The Indonesian government considers the Morning Star flag to be a separatist

symbol and has banned its use. (Note: Individuals in several major Papuan cities are either on trial or awaiting trial for treason in connection with flag-raising protests. See reftels.) Yaboysembut told poloff that the flag raising was not part of the DAP program for the event.

15. (C) Exact details of what happened next remain sketchy. Several contacts in Wamena told us that police officers tried to lower the Morning Star flag but Papuan activists resisted. Police fired warning shots into the air in an attempt to disperse the crowd. After several rounds were fired, one Papuan--35 year old Opinus Tabuni--lay dead. An autopsy later revealed that he had been shot twice in the chest. We have received conflicting reports about who shot Tabuni. Preliminary reports from law-enforcement contacts indicated that a regular police officer was responsible for the shooting.

16. (C) Wamena remained tense after the shooting as police tried to disperse the crowd, many of whom had come from outlying villages. Many of the Papuans were armed with spears, bows and arrows and other traditional weapons. As of Monday, August 11, several thousand people remained gathered in central Wamena, although the situation was calm. On the advice of the GOI, Mission has postponed a trip to Papua due to the incident and related tensions.

RAISING USG CONCERNS

17. (C) Poloff raised USG concerns regarding the incident with Trini Gunarti Deputy Director for North American Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) and Cicilia Rusdiharini, who is slated to replace Gunarti. Poloff

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underscored that the USG was concerned about the shooting in Wamena and urged the GOI to investigate exactly what happened.

18. (C) Gunarti responded that Indonesian police and military officials were currently investigating the shooting. She said that GOI officials had received reports that security officers in Wamena might have felt themselves in danger and fired in self defense. Gunarti said the GOI investigation would be "transparent and impartial." Poloff noted that much about the incident remained opaque and it was important to establish the facts as quickly as possible. He urged the GOI to make public the results of its investigation.

STRONG REACTIONS TO CONGRESSIONAL LETTER

19. (SBU) In a separate development re Papua, Indonesian officials and NGOs have criticized a recent U.S. Congressional letter on human rights in the province. (Note: The July 29, 2008, letter signed by 40 Members of Congress, called for the release of Papuan activists Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage. The two were imprisoned in May 2005 for their participation in a December 2004 protest that raised the Morning Star flag.) Several members of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) denounced the letter as unwarranted "interference" in the country's internal affairs. DPR members said the letter revealed a lack of respect for Indonesia's sovereignty.

110. (SBU) TNI Commander General Djoko Santoso also characterized the letter as "interference" and said that the GOI's detention of the two alleged separatists was entirely lawful. Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono, however, disagreed and said that the Members of Congress who signed the letter were simply expressing their views about one particular case. FM Hassan Wirajuda told reporters that the GOI would soon reply to the letter. He stressed that the two Papuans had been convicted in a legitimate legal proceeding and that the GOI's response would urge respect for Indonesia's legal system.

¶11. (C) DEPLU officials Gunarti and Rusdiharini also raised GOI concerns about the letter with poloff. Poloff clarified that the USG fully respected Indonesian sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States did not support separatist movements in any part of Indonesia, including in Papua. That said, the USG also believed that Indonesia had an obligation to respect its citizens' freedom of expression. Mission also issued a press release that reinforced this message.

¶12. (SBU) In response to the Congressional letter, the hard-line Islamist group Hisbut Tahrir organized demonstrations in Jakarta and in Medan and Surabaya. Approximately 150 protesters demonstrated outside the Embassy on Saturday, August 9. On Sunday, August 10, approximately 300 persons demonstrated in Medan while around 500 gathered near ConGen Surabaya. The demonstrations were peaceful.

HUME